



HEARING
IN
COLOR

LATINIDAD

la gente y la música

June 11th, 2022 | 7PM

Land Acknowledgment

Hearing in Color would like to acknowledge that Chicago is part of the traditional homelands of the Council of the Three Fires: the Odawa, Ojibwe, and the Potawatomi. Many other tribes, such as the Miami, Ho-Chunk, Sac, Fox, and Menominee — also called this area home.

By making this land acknowledgment, we recognize that the United States of America is an ongoing colonial project, of which we are all participants. Not only was this land stolen but so was the labor of stolen people. We offer recognition, respect, and gratitude to the African and Indigenous peoples who were stewards of this land and to those who are living and thriving today.

About Hearing in Color

Our Mission

Hearing in Color is a Chicago-based organization dedicated to sharing music, stories, and composers, that have been historically excluded from musical spaces, with its community. Our productions underscore the work of artists who are overlooked in mediums where White-centered experiences are the default. Hearing in Color believes in the power of music to build community, to bring comfort, to embolden, and to inspire in the face of subjugation and oppression. Hearing in Color believes that gatekeeping has appropriated perspectives and stories of specific lived experiences. By sharing space with those most deeply affected, we are able to present stories grounded in truth.

Join us in telling stories grounded in truth

Your support allows us to present public performances that consider a diverse range of income levels and accessibility within each community. 80% of all donations go directly to our artists and production staff so that we remain an example of the equitable organization needed in our arts community.

Want to get involved? Reach out, we'd love to hear from you!



Hearing in Color is a sponsored project of Fractured Atlas, a non-profit arts service organization. Contributions for the charitable purposes of Hearing in Color must be made payable to "Fractured Atlas" only and are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.

Collaborator Bios



Dr. Zuly Inirio

Afro-Latina soprano Zuly Inirio hails from the Dominican Republic and has appeared as a soloist throughout the United States and Europe. Her roles include Mrs. Grose in *The Turn of the Screw*, First Lady in *The Magic Flute*, Gertrud in *Hansel und Gretel*, Santuzza in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, and scenes from *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Götterdämmerung*, *Falstaff*, and *Albert Herring*. She was part of Opera Louisiana's *The Ring* (reduced) and where she performed the roles of Wellgunde, Ortlinde, and 2nd Norn.

Ms. Inirio is also well-versed in concert work and as a recitalist, most notably in the *Lyrical Dialogues* Organized by the Lyrical Society at Harvard in Boston, MA where she debuted Carson Cooman's *Sunset*. She also performed Jake Heggie's *Natural Selection* in Baton Rouge, LA where she worked with the composer directly. Most recently, she was highlighted in Austin Opera's *Concerts at the Consulate*.

European highlights include soprano soloist for the Verdi *Requiem* in Munich, Germany at Allerheiligenkirche under the baton of Massimiliano Murrall and singing High Priestess while covering the title role in Verdi's *Aida* with the Mythos Opera Festival in Sicily, Italy.

In 2022, Ms. Inirio will perform the role of Isabelle in Mizzy Mazzoli's *Song of the Uproar* with The Demaskus Theater Collective in Pittsburgh, PA, and as part of her Afro-Latinx Song & Opera Project will be performing a series of recitals for the University of Pittsburgh, Chamber Music Pittsburgh, and East Liberty Presbyterian Church.

Zuly Inirio holds a Doctor of Musical Arts Degree and a Master of Music Degree from Louisiana State University where she was the recipient of a full-tuition scholarship. She completed her Bachelor of Music Degree at New World School of the Arts in Miami, FL where she was also a recipient of a full-tuition scholarship. Ms. Inirio currently resides in Pittsburgh, PA.



Sebastian Armendariz

Born in El Paso, TX, Sebastian Armendariz is a Mexican-American tenor, actor, content creator, and cancer survivor currently based in New York City. Sebastian's dedication to moving performance and creating welcoming and diverse digital spaces is only matched by his love for his family. He is the youngest of five children, a proud uncle, and a lover of sonnets, soccer, and Salsa dancing.

Sebastian performed as a Resident Artist with Indianapolis Opera where he covered the role of Nemorino in Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore*, attended the Chautauqua Institution where he performed the role of Flute opposite Matthew Rose (Bottom) in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as well as Prince Karl Franz in Romberg's *The Student Prince*, and was an Apprentice Artist with Sarasota Opera for two seasons.

Since his cancer diagnosis in 2019 followed by the Covid19 pandemic, Sebastian's career has shifted toward TV, film, musical theater, and content production. Since 2020, he has partnered with Movember to raise awareness and funds for men's health issues, made his television debut ("*The Food That Built America*"), and performed in Theatre Now's developmental reading of Steve Wallace's new musical, *Animal Farm*, in New York City.

Sebastian holds an MM in Voice Performance from DePaul University in Chicago and a BA in Music from the University of Wisconsin Eau Claire. He hopes this collaboration with *Hearing in Color* will be the first of many projects he will work on to spotlight Latinx voices and experiences.

Program notes

For LATINIDAD: La gente y la musica, my aim was to focus on Blackness and Indigeneity in Latinidad. I specifically asked artists to share music that connected with their identity in some way.

For example, I chose to perform selections from Cinco canciones negras as a nod to my experience as an Afro-Latina in classical music. When I was curating a Spanish and Latin American music recital for my doctoral program, this song cycle was the only one I could find that directly spoke about Afro-Latinidad. My hope is that through scholarship and new commissions, there will be more music that reflects on marginalized communities within Latinidad.

– ZULY INIRO

Conversations surrounding identity are complex. While the words we use to identify ourselves and those around us can be useful, there exist spaces on the outer edges of those words in which many people fall into. There are cracks within the verbal foundations which we find ourselves living upon; liminal existences that resist strict categorization. This is not a project specifically about those liminal existences, but it does contain them. This is an exploration of people, of artists, who navigate a world that was not built by them, nor for them.

When LaRob K. Rafael reached out to me to help organize an event centering Latinidad and Latinx voices for a concert/production with Hearing in Color, I was ecstatic. But in my first email back to him, I was quick to let him know that there's a lot to unpack, and I could not be the only organizer. To put it bluntly, I hold a very privileged position when it comes to Latine people. Yes, I'm Mexican-American. Yes, my father and grandmother were immigrants from Mexico. Yes, I speak Spanish. However, I'm also a heterosexual white man. As I put it to LaRob, I have the privilege to go to the court, legally change my name to Michael Jordan, and live my life as a White man (capital "W") in the United States. Of course, I would never do this (lest I become Ted Cruz), but this nominal escape from one's identity is not an option for others, including Michael Jordan and my Afro-Latinx and indigenous colleagues. And while it is true that music by composers who share my identity are marginalized in the classical world, that marginalization is only furthered for Afro-Latinx and indigenous composers and people.

To dive into the complexities of Latinx identities is to dive into the DNA of our society - the tightly bound intersection of our atrocities and our miracles, our histories and our present. For instance, by using the terms "Latinx" and "Latine," I am already engaging in a conversation about gender. Both of these terms have significant and important histories, and exist to question the gender binary of a colonial language and include those who exist outside of that language's narrow and unnatural confines. And let's have a look at this Spanish language. Despite the popular view, it is not ubiquitous throughout Latin America. Languages like Nahuatl and Taíno are a very small sample of native languages that exist in Latin America - some still spoken and some extinguished by colonialism. Further, there are Latinx people in the United States who, due to punishments in schools, propaganda, social stigma, or the pressure of assimilation, were never taught Spanish growing up. Are their identities invalid because of this?

Program notes (cont.)

Gender, language, and colonialism intersect with the enslaving and selling of African peoples in the Americas and the genocide of indigenous peoples to lead us to incredibly nuanced conversations concerning white supremacy, colorism, and capitalism. When we dive into Latinx identities, we must realize we are exploring a people spanning a vast continent (or two continents if you were taught in the United States), including tens of countries, multiple languages, and the descendants of indigenous peoples, enslaved Africans, their colonizers, and their enslavers. Many of our family trees will include all of these histories - all of these people. I know mine does.

When pitching ideas to LaRob for this project, I proposed two broad ideas to capture this complexity: 1) We go big. We get as many Latinx artists as we can, from as many countries as we can, with as many languages, genders, and races as we can to show the breadth of experiences and histories that are encapsulated in these words, Latinx, Latine, Latinidad. OR 2) We go small. We zoom in on individuals, and by treating their identities, artistry, and stories with the respect and care they deserve, we demonstrate the attention which these artists should demand from the broader musical community.

The second prevailed, and it is what you will be experiencing today. Interviews with Latinx artists in New York City talking about their identity, their personal history, and how it has impacted their lives and their careers coming up in the classical music world - a world that has marginalized even the most privileged of Latine musicians and composers. These artists have also recorded performances of songs of their choice, songs that resonate with their identity. For Celeste Morales, her songs connect her to her family and represent a reconnection to her Mexican roots. In David Sanchez's case, these art songs by Obradors were the first songs ever given to him in Spanish - he was in grad school. The folk songs chosen by Alexandra Martinez Turano remind her of the heartache of those who came before her, and the Zarzuela piece affirms her agency in the direction of her artistic career. The Venezuelan songs sung by Maria Brea include songs written for her that tell the history of her people, one of which, "Habladurías" includes a piano arrangement by her husband, Colby Charnin. To perform pieces that resonate with you without regard to arbitrary requirements or tradition is a rare gift for classical singers. I am incredibly proud to be a part of this experience, and to share this with you.

There are spaces and cracks around the word Latinidad, especially when it comes to the classical world. We fill those spaces by taking care of the artists within them. We take care of what is so vitally important in this life: la gente y la música - the people and the music.

– SEBASTIAN ARMENDARIZ

Program

Hearing in Color Presents **Latinidad: la gente y la música** with Dr. Zuly Inirio and Sebastian Armendariz

Una mañana (Café Tacvba)

Claudia Chapa
Arnold Yzaguirre, Guitar

Gema (Javier Solis)
Júrame (Maria Grever)

Celeste Morales
Eric Zolan, Guitar

De mi amor (Felipe Villanueva)

Cynthia López-Pérez

Adela (arr. Rodrigo)
La Petenera (Moreno Torroba)
La rosa y el sauce (Carlos Guastavino)

Alexandra Martinez Turano
Ahmed Alom, Piano

Mariachi Songs

Omar Rodriguez

1. *Paloma Querido*
2. *Mexico Lindo y Querido*

Selections from *Cinco Canciones Negras*
(Xavier Montsalvatge)

Zuly Inirio
Amaury Morales, Piano
Hugo Cruz, Percussion

1. *Cuba dentro de un piano*
4. *Cancion de cuna para dormir*
5. *Canto Negro*

Chiquitita la novia (Fernando Obradors)
Del cabello más sutil (Fernando Obradors)
Al amor (Fernando Obradors)

David Morgans Sanchez

Part 1. No.3 (Llueve) (Reinaldo Moya)
Alba (Miguel Astor/García Lorca)
Habladurías (Antonio Esteves arr. by Colby Charnin)

Maria Brea
Colby Charnin, Piano

INTERMISSION

Thank you for watching!

Performer Bios

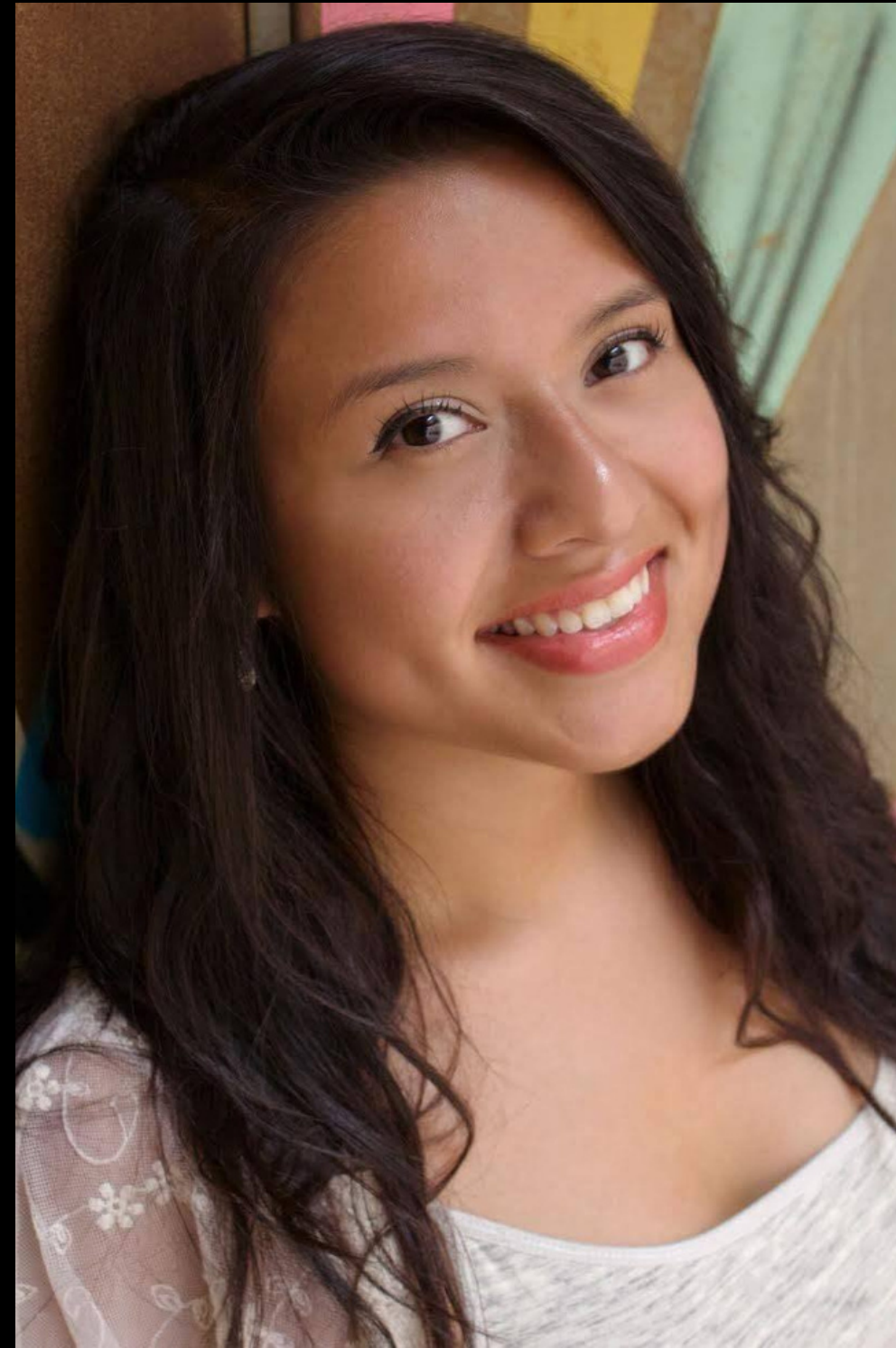
David Morgans Sanchez

Grammy Award-winning, Kansas City native David Morgans Sanchez is a promising young Afro-Latinx tenor. This season, he will make his role and house debut with Florentine Opera as Rodolfo in their new production of Puccini's *La Boheme*. The 2021-2022 season began with Sanchez opening the Metropolitan Opera's new season as Pledge in Terrence Blanchard's *Fire Shut Up In My Bones*. Next, he reprised his role as Prayer in The Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*, sang concert work in the Met's performances of Verdi's *Requiem* and Mahler's *Symphony No. 2*, and was also in this season's Live in HD production of Boris Godunov. Sanchez can also be seen at the Met this year in their productions of Wagner's *Die Meistersinger*, Puccini's *La Boheme*, and their brand-new French production of Verdi's *Don Carlos*.

Last season, Sanchez was a resident artist with Portland Opera where he made his debut of Uncle Mac in *Night Trip* by Carlos Simon, studied the roles of Ferrando in Mozart's *Così fan tutte* and Manrico in *Il Trovatore*, and sang several recitals. He was also the soloist in Adolphus Hailstork's cantata for Tenor, *I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes* in a concert with Hunter College. The 2019-2020 season found Sanchez as a finalist in the Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center Competition hosted by the Chicago Lyric Opera. Sanchez made his Metropolitan Opera debut as prayer in their new production of The Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* and appeared in their new production of Wagner's *Der fliegende Holländer*.

Sanchez appears on Albany Records' world premiere professional recording of Adolphus Hailstork's *I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes*; a cantata for solo tenor, chorus, and piano featuring William Jewell College Concert Choir as the underpinning of Hailstork's masterpiece along with other exceptional musical offerings from the Concert Choir.

Sanchez is a Kansas City native. He holds his Bachelor of Science in Music from William Jewell College in Liberty, Missouri, and his Master of Music from the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory of Music and Dance.



Cynthia López Pérez

Cynthia López-Pérez is a Xicana soprano originally from Los Angeles, California. Ms. López-Pérez made her debut on the opera stage as Susanna (*Le Nozze di Figaro*) with the Ohio State University Lyric and Opera Theatre. Recent performances include Leonore (*Fidelio*) with Promenade Opera Project, Despina (*Così fan tutte*), Blanche (*Dialogues des Carmélites*) with Boston Conservatory Opera and Nannetta (*Falstaff*) with Martina Arroyo Prelude to Performance. Upcoming performances include Maria (*West Side Story*) and Mimi (*La Bohème*) with MassOpera. Ms. López-Pérez recently completed her graduate studies at The Boston Conservatory, where she is a recipient of the Yolanda Cerreta Pangaro Scholarship, pursuing a degree in Opera Performance under the tutelage of Dr. Rebecca Folsom.

She is the Co-founder of Latina Women in Opera, an organization dedicated to promoting and supporting femme-identifying Latina, and non-binary & gender non-conforming Latinx. She is also a 2021 National Association of Latinx Arts and Cultures (NALAC) Leadership Institute Fellow, a non-profit dedicated to the professional development of Latinx artists and Latinx led organizations. As an arts professional, she is dedicated to championing Latinx representation with intentionality, centering historically excluded folks within the community in the classical music industry. She has co-curated several concerts in New York City dedicated to highlighting social justice issues and political crises affecting Latinx in both Latin America and the United States, raising funds for nonprofits such as Raíces and SOS Venezuela. She has had the pleasure of combining her work as a professional in the arts and activist through concert work, lectures, panel discussions, and community outreach. She firmly believes that at the heart of leadership work is community, collaboration, and connection.

Performer Bios



Colby Charnin

American pianist Colby Charnin has already proven himself to be an artist of distinction and has had considerable accolades behind him. Born in New York but raised in Miami, Mr. Charnin's concert appearances have included solo recitals, chamber music, and concerto performances. He has had the privilege to work with members of the New World Symphony Orchestra performing Felix Mendelssohn's Piano Concerto No.1 in g minor. By the age of 14, he was invited to perform solo concerts in Salzburg, Austria and Venice, Italy. Among his awards were first prize at the Florida Federation of Music State Piano Competition and the Florida's First Lady's Arts Recognition Scholarship Award, being the only pianist throughout the entire state to receive this honor. Colby has performed all over the United States and Europe, including notable places and festivals such as Weill Recital Hall, Merkin Hall and the Amalfi Coast Music Festival.

Mr. Charnin began his piano studies at age eight. At age twelve, he was accepted as a pupil of the famed Cuban virtuoso Rodolfo Brito, and then went on to study with Jorge Emilio Rodriguez, a student of the world renowned pianist, Dmitri Bashkirov. He has coached with such renowned virtuosos as Sergei Babayan, Gerald Robbins, and Kemal Gekic. Colby graduated with a Bachelor's and Master's degree in piano performance from the Manhattan School of Music where he studied with internationally prominent pianist and pedagogue Nina Svetlanova. In addition to performing, Mr. Charnin is also a music teacher with an extensive career in curriculum development and teaching.



Arnold Yzaguirre

Classical Guitarist, Arnold Yzaguirre is a highly talented performer and teacher. He started his classical guitar journey with Cain Budds at Laredo Community College in 2003 and then with Robby Gibson, Aleksandr Tsiboulski and Adam Holzman at the University of Texas at Austin in 2006. Arnold is an active solo and ensemble performer from small to large concerts with audiences of 1,000+. Arnold is also the self-proclaimed "Wedding guy" in Austin and surrounding areas, having performed at many wedding ceremonies. He currently teaches Classical guitar in Austin, TX. One of the highlights of his career thus far is being a part of Austin Classical Guitar and their Non-profit organization, an organization that brings the guitar to many Elementary/Middle and High Schools all around the world. Through them, he has found many teaching opportunities as well as the Lullaby Project. Arnold is one of the teaching artists for the Austin Lullaby Project, a professional collaboration with Austin Classical Guitar and Carnegie Hall Weill Institute. In his spare time, Arnold enjoys, hiking, biking, building furniture with reclaimed wood, watching movies and lots of live music but most of all, spending time with his wife and two pups!

Performer Bios

Celeste Morales

Mexican-American Soprano, Celeste Morales is a recent Masters graduate of Manhattan School of Music majoring in Vocal Performance. In 2016, she recorded an album called OneVoice with Vocalibre, a hybrid a-cappella ensemble that fuses together Pop, RnB, Choral and South African freedom songs. Following that year she was chosen to be a Resident Artist with OPERA San Antonio. Previous credits include Dialogues of the Carmelites (Madame Lidoine), Don Giovanni (Donna Anna), Hansel and Gretel (Mother) and L'amico Fritz (Suzel) Otello (Desdemona) with Texas State University; scenes/roles with the Manhattan School of Music include Mozart's Don Giovanni (Donna Elvira), Le Nozze di Figaro (Countess), Britten's Turn of the Screw (Mrs. Grose) and Verdi's Falstaff (Alice Ford). Upon graduating she performed with the Musiktheater Bavaria Opera Summer Program in Oberaudorf, Germany and with Shoreline Theatrical Arts showcasing a new Off-Broadway musical called SIX written by Chad Harden. Scholarships and awards include the Las Casas Foundation Competition; Theresa Gordon Opera Excellence Award (TSU); Margaret Hoswell van Der Marck Scholarship and Alexandra Hunt Endowed Vocal Scholarship in Opera Studies (MSM). In 2019, she debuted the role of Mimi in Puccini's La Boheme with the Lowveld Chamber Music Association in Lowveld, South Africa. In 2020, she became an Emerging Artist with the Living Music Institute and will perform with the Mississippi University Orchestra as their featured Aria Competition Winner. In 2021, she was chosen to be a part of the Utopia Arts Mentorship Program, performed with the Merola Opera Program and won an award for Best Musical Film in Back Home: Through The Stage Door. This fall she will perform in composer Nathan Felix's award winning production of The War Bride as an immersive pop-up opera at the High Line Nine Gallery in Chelsea, NYC. Recently, she received first prize in the Giulio Gari Foundation International Vocal Competition. This summer she returns to the Merola Opera Program to perform in their Schwabacher Scenes Programs, American Art Song Recital, and the Merola Grand Finale.



Amaury Morales

Regarded as “an authority in the classical music world (Ciudad Corazón)” and “a vigorous, energetic performer (Toplicke Vesti)” pianist Amaury Morales has performed widely in major venues of Latin America, the United States, Europe and Asia; Amaury has been praised as “a mixture of maturity and youth that reveals an underlying serenity (La Información).” For his methodical choice of repertoire, his performances of Latin-American music have earned him a reputation as an advocate of the region's classical music: “It was really refreshing to hear a completely different, unconventional latin rhythm performed by the pianist from this territory who has been awarded many times (Toplicke Vesti, Serbia).” The recipient of several awards, Amaury was awarded for three consecutive years with the Dr. Mark H Cooley scholarship award for outstanding achievement, and has received recognition in competitions such as 3rd place in the Latin American piano festival (2001), 2nd Place in the Manuel Rueda piano competition (2003), 2nd place in the American Protegé (2011) international competition and 1st place in the Silverman chamber music competition (2009). His orchestra appearances include the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Westmoreland Symphony Orchestra, Carnegie Mellon baroque ensemble, and the Carnegie Mellon Philharmonic.

Born in the Dominican Republic, Amaury started his piano studies at the Institute of Culture and Arts (ICA) in the city of Santiago. He studied piano with Dr. Hilda Melis, and music theory with Mercedes Machín. He received his Bachelor's degree at the Boston Conservatory as a student of Max Levinson, and a Master's Degree at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, where he studied with Dr. Sergey Schepkin. Amaury furthered his artistic education with legendary German pianist Klaus Schilde. A devoted educator, Amaury has given masterclasses in Latin America, Istanbul, Serbia, Singapore, and the United States. Amaury is the Chair of the Piano Department at the Pittsburgh Music Academy, he also works in the music and drama departments at Carnegie Mellon University. For more information, please visit www.amaurymorales.com



Performer Bios



Ahmed Alom

Cuban-born pianist Ahmed Alom is a versatile, classically trained pianist who since his arrival to New York City, has become one of the leading young figures in piano performance. He pursued his classical piano performance studies at the Manhattan School of Music, as a scholarship student of the Viola B. Marcus Foundation and Flavio Varani Fund for Pianists, under the guidance of Dr. Solomon Mikowsky.

In 2022, as member of People of Earth Collective, a multicultural 14 piece band based in New York City, he premiered Dafnis Prieto's (MacArthur Fellowship) *TENTACIÓN*, written for the band in collaboration with Musica America's Conductor of the Year: Teddy Abrams. They performed the piece with the Louisville Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra and New World Symphony Orchestra. Also in 2022, he collaborated as a pianist/conductor with Ballet Hispanico, for their world premiere of the Ballet "Doña Perón", choreographed by Annabelle Lopez Ochoa with an original score written by Peter Salem.

His discography includes appearances in Edwin Perez's Street Corner Chronicles, Rudyck Vidal Latin Jazz Trio: *Abriendo Ciclos*, and the latest album by Pedro Girauda Tango Quartet: *Impulso Tanguero*. Throughout his career, Ahmed was coached in Cuba, with piano teachers deeply influenced by Russian musical education: Beatriz Olivera, Hortensia Upmann, Leonardo Gell, Ninowska Fernandez and Svetlana Logounova. He has performed in masterclasses taught by Luca Chiantore, Robert Levin, William Wolfram, Richard Goode and Kirill Gerstein. He has also received lessons about contemporary music with Anthony de Mare, and chamber music coachings with Sylvia Rosenberg.

Mr. Alom is scheduled to perform Beethoven's "Emperor" Piano Concerto, conducted by Fernando Marina, with the orchestra of the Academia 1830 in Mallorca, Spain. He's also set to perform with virtuoso violinist Ruben Rengel at the 2023 season of the Linton Chamber Music Festival.



Hugo Alexander Cruz Machado

Hugo Alexander Cruz Machado is a Cuban-born, award winning, international drummer and composer who has performed in South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Mexico, Chile, Venezuela, and the United States. Hugo is the leader of the group Caminos, who have made appearances at the Pittsburgh International Jazz Festival 2019, Fábrica de Artes in Havana, Cuba, First Night Pittsburgh 2020, City of Asylum, The Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh Cultural Trust events, The Frick Museum, Con Alma, Carnegie Museum of arts in Pittsburgh, among others.

Caminos fuse rhythms and melodies of Afro-Cuban, Cuban, and American music, in an original contemporary expression that honors traditional Cuban form. Hugo Cruz and Caminos released an album this February called *Punto de Partida*, featuring many notable musicians from Cuba and the U.S., recording eight of Hugo's original compositions.

While a resident of Cuba, Hugo toured regularly with *Síntesis*, a leading Afro Cuban rock-fusion group. Hugo has performed in Havana's largest jazz festival, Jazz Plaza, with acclaimed artists Dave Weckl and Víctor Goines. He is a graduate of the Instituto Superior de Artes, the leading arts university of Cuba, and in 2014, won the award as the "best drummer" at the international Festival del Tambor Guillermo Barreto in Memoriam in Havana, Cuba.

Hugo has shared the stage and studio with many of Cuba's leading musicians, such as La Trovuntivitis, Tony Guzmán y Su Poder Latino, Síntesis, Janio Abreu y Aire de Concierto, Adrian Berazain, Interactivo, Zule Guerra, Alberto Lesca y Formas, La Academia de Ruy López Nussa, Silvio Rodriguez, Amaury Perez, Banda de Concierto Municipal de La Habana, Grupo Interactivo, Julito Padron, William Vivanco and Mayco de Alma. Hugo performs and records with notable Pittsburgh artists, including Afro Yaqui Music Collective, Dr. James Johnson, Roger Humphries, Ernest McCarty Jr, Tubby Daniels, Dwayne Dolphin, Mark Strickland, Pogie Bell, Lou Stelute and Max Leake. Hugo also had performed at the Heinz Hall as a special guest of the Pittsburgh Symphony. Cruz is a drum teacher at the Afro American Music Institute and at Hope Academy Orchestra. He has been teaching workshops as a special guest at the University of Pittsburgh, and several youth and cultural organizations throughout the city.

Performer Bios

Maria Brea

Maria Brea, soprano, is a native of Caracas, Venezuela. Praised for "very classy Venezuelan soprano" by The arts desk, "versatile soprano" by Tampa Bay and "luxurious soprano" and as Micaela; "her lush tones and thrilling diminuendos were warmly received" by The Brooklyn Reporter. Ms. Brea's signature roles include: Gilda in Verdi's Rigoletto, Micaëla in Bizet's Carmen, Nedda in Leoncavallo's Pagliacci, Musetta in Puccini's La Bohème, Agrippina by Handel, Donna Anna in Mozart's Don Giovanni, Elena in Giménez's El Barbero de Sevilla. Ms. Brea is a fine recitalist and promoter of art song as well as an avid Oratorio singer.

Maria sang Norina in Donizetti's Don Pasquale with The Barn Opera and was praised for "with a voice that mixes brilliance and richness" Maria makes her debut at The Stern Auditorium at Carnegie Hall with the Cecilia Chorus of New York singing the Soprano Solo in Orff's Carmina Burana under the baton of Maestro Mark Shapiro.

Ms. Brea most recently won the Metropolitan Opera District of Philadelphia 2022. With one day notice, Maria is jumping in as soloist for two performances of Franz Haydn's Creation Oratorio with the Richmond Symphony Orchestra conducted by Erin Freeman. Later this season, you can catch Maria singing Gilda in Rigoletto in Pittsburgh under the baton of Maestra Maria Sensi Sellner at Resonance works. This summer 2022 Maria covers the role of Margaret Herschel in Southern Crossings by Syrian award winner composer Zaid Jabri.

Ms. Brea's other awards and honors include the Mae Zenke Orvis Scholarship at the Manhattan School of Music where she received her Bachelor's in Vocal Performance and a Kovner Fellow at the Juilliard School of Music where she received her Master's. Maria was a proud recipient of a Novick Career Advancement Grant. Maria's current teachers, mentors and coaches include Manny Pérez, Martina Arroyo, Pablo Zinger, Arlene Shrut, Colby Charnin, Felix Jarrar, Javier Arrebola, Isabel Arraiza and Rachelle Jonck. Brea's father, a music teacher and Cuatro player, taught her Venezuelan folk music from an early age. Maria is a co-founder of the instagram platform Latina Women in Opera and a Spanish Diction expert at DictionBuddy.com



Claudia Chapa

Celebrated for her "arresting stage presence" coupled with "exquisite sensitivity," Mexican mezzo-soprano Claudia Chapa is a versatile performer in high demand across the nation. In 2019-2020, Ms. Chapa made her Houston Grand Opera debut originating the role of Josefina in the world premiere of El Milagro del Recuerdo, a role she will reprise in her debut with Arizona Opera in 2021. Additionally this season, Ms. Chapa joins the cast of Eugene Onegin with The Dallas Symphony conducted by Maestro Fabio Luisi and will be heard as the alto soloist for Beethoven's Missa Solemnis with the National Philharmonic. In addition to her active performance schedule, Claudia is an in-demand concert curator specializing in Hispanic/Latinx programming. She is currently curating Concerts at the Consulate/Conciertos en el Consulado in the new partnership between Austin Opera and the Mexican Consulate. Claudia took part in a concert that she co-curated entitled Entre Amigos which opened Fort Worth Opera's historic 75th Season.

In 2021, Ms. Chapa performed the Title Role in Douglas Pew's Penny in her debut with Opera Grand Rapids and she made a return to Opera San Antonio to sing Alisa in Lucia di Lammermoor. Other recent highlights include recording Handel's Messiah with the Royal Philharmonic at the famed Abbey Roads Studios, a return to Alabama Symphony as featured soloist in El amor brujo (de Falla) and Neruda Songs (Lieberson), and house and role debuts as Fenena (Nabucco) with West Bay Opera.

Claudia Chapa is proud to do work with Austin Classical Guitar's Lullaby Project pairing pregnant women and new mothers and fathers with professional artists to write and sing personal lullabies for their babies, supporting maternal health, aiding childhood development, and strengthening the bond between parent and child.

Ms. Chapa is a grant recipient from the Olga Forrai Foundation for exceptionally large, dramatic voices in the field of opera, and studied vocal performance at the Butler School of Music at The University of Texas at Austin. She currently resides in Austin with her husband and two glorious chihuahuas.



Performer Bios

Alexandra Martinez-Turano

Alexandra Martinez-Turano, soprano, is a proud native of Albuquerque, New Mexico. She is recognized for her vibrant soprano and is known for her “crystalline tones.” She "smoldered sexily in her dancing and singing" while making her mainstage debut with Chicago Opera Theater (Chicago Tribune).

In 2020, Alexandra was profiled in Classical Singer Magazine for their Overcoming Adversity column. Having overcome poverty and parental drug and alcohol addiction, she believes her hardships as a young person should not limit how much she can achieve.

Alexandra has most recently performed in a series of concerts with Portland Opera and, in 2019, made her debut with Sarasota Opera in over 30 performances as an Apprentice Artist. Alexandra is a graduate of the Chicago Opera Theater's (COT) two-year Young Artist Residency. While at COT, Alexandra covered the role of Rita, from Donizetti's Rita. With Chicago Opera Theater and Long Beach Opera, Alexandra performed in Martin's The Love Potion, Purcell's The Fairy Queen as Helena, and performed in the North American Premier Philip Glass' The Perfect American as Sharon Disney with Mr. Glass in the audience. In 2018, she reprised her role in Martin's The Love Potion with Long Beach Opera, and work-shopped a newly commissioned work titled Locket Aria's at the Chicago Art Institute. Alexandra's other highlights include performing the roles of Adele, Anna, Despina, Echo, Julie Jordan, Pamina, Pernille, Sandrina, and Suor Genovieffa, amongst others. She has performed with Portland Opera, Sarasota Opera, Chicago Opera Theater, Long Beach Opera, LTD Opera, Opera Southwest, OperaWorks, International Lyric Academy (Viterbo, Italy), Landmark Musicals, University of New Mexico's Opera Theatre and Symphony Orchestra, University of Southern California Opera Theater, La Mirada Symphony and more.

Alexandra has earned a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of New Mexico College of Fine Arts, a Masters of Music degree from the University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music, and a Professional Diploma in Operatic Studies from the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University. She currently lives in New York City with her fiancé, Dane, and their beagle-mix, Lenni.



Omar Rodriguez

Known for his vocal flexibility across multiple styles, some of Omar Rodriguez' recent operatic roles include one of the Dater #22 in Ching's Speed Dating Tonight, Papageno in Mozart's The Magic Flute, Count Almaviva in Le nozze di Figaro, and Guglielmo in Così fan tutte, and Joe in Musto's Later the Same Evening. He has also been a frequent soloist with Ensemble Monterey Chamber Orchestra, including as bass soloist in Purcell's Mass to St. Cecilia, Handel's Messiah, and Israel in Egypt. Other highlights include attending the Middlebury College German for Singers Language Immersion program as a 2021 Max Kade fellow, where he reprised the role of Papageno. He is a 2021-2 Chrisman Studio Artist with Opera Santa Barbara, where will be singing the role of the Marquis in Verdi's La Traviata.

Omar has performed as a soloist in venues such as Carnegie Hall, Venice's Basilica San Marco, Vienna's Votivkirche and the Salzburg Residenz Palast. As a session musician, he has sung multiple times in the ensemble of Andrea Bocelli, the Hollywood Bowl's Harry Potter: In Concert, and in John Williams-Steven Spielberg: The Ultimate Collection with Sony Classical. Omar is also an avid mariachi singer, performing both live and on Tiktok @shonen_chump, and is working on a symphonic metal album with the Canada-based band Dusk Meridian. Omar speaks English, Spanish, and German.

Gracias por todo/Special Thanks

It is especially important to me that Hearing in Color remains an organization that centers those whose voices have gone far too long silenced or unheard. Presenting this concert is another step toward the fulfilment of that vision. Each artist showcased tonight presented something special for our audiences to experience. Thank you, all for your artistry and vulnerability. I would like to offer my sincerest thank you to Dr. Zuly Inirio and Sebastian M. Armendariz for trusting us with their vision to tell stories of misrepresented communities in Latinidad. I am grateful for such a collaboration and look forward to many more.

- LaRob K. Rafael, Founder & Artistic Director



Other special thanks include:

Special Guest Guitarist (Gema) - Eric Zolan
Production Advisor - Allan J. Moore
The Family of Maria Brea and Colby Charnin
Caitlin Falls & Kirsten Crockett



OPERA
AMERICA

Credits:

Curation: Zuly Inirio (Pittsburgh) & Sebastian Armedariz (New York)
Video Direction, Sound Design, and Editing: Sebastian Armendariz
Lead Production Director/Tech: Keegan M. Morris

Hearing in Color Team

Artistic Director: LaRob K. Rafael
Artist Liaison: Megan Fletcher
Managing Director: Angela Hamilton
Marketing Director: Maureen Smith
Development & Finance Manager: Joseph J. Tang
Communications Manager: Margaret Kellas

